THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

April/May 2023 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

Theft and Murder

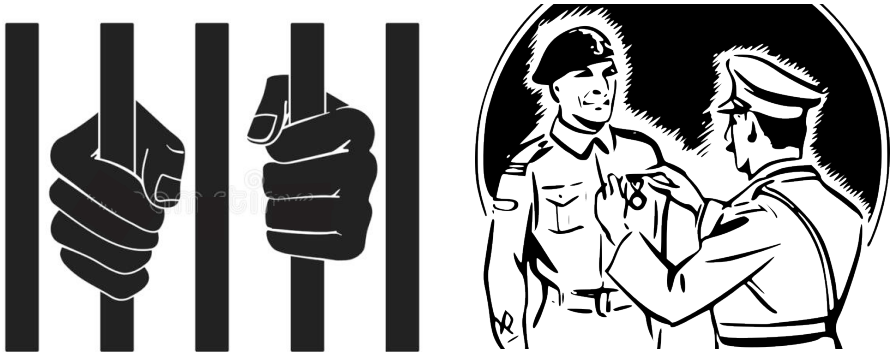
by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

On average, a person convicted of premeditated murder in the US will spend 15 years in jail. Anyone convicted of felony theft can serve up to five years. Texas and Wisconsin have America's highest threshold for felony theft at $2,500, while Virginia is the lowest at $200. In Massachusetts, Florida, and New Jersey, stealing $300 is a felony, resulting in prison and denial of voting rights.

It appears that the American criminal justice system is hard on theft and murder, but, in actuality, that's not true when the stealing and killing are done at scale. As a US Navy bomber pilot in 1967, John McCain flew 22 missions over North Vietnam during Operation Rolling Thunder, a campaign that took the lives of at least 182,000 civilians. His role in this mass killing did not preclude him from being elected to the US Senate. As John Lithgow says in the film "Cliffhanger": "You kill three people, they call you a murderer. You kill a million people, they call you a conqueror. Go figure."

Interestingly, 31 US presidents and hundreds of senators and representatives were military veterans. None of them served a day in jail for the people they killed. Similarly, the CEO's of Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, General Dynamics, and other US military contractors are handsomely paid to produce weapons that killed more than a million people in the last 30 years, and which threaten the annihilation of life on the planet. Although all of these executives boasted about how lethal their products are, none of them have been charged as accessories to murder.

Similarly, while the bottom 50% of US wage earners, who have 3.3% of the wealth, go to jail for stealing a few hundred bucks, the top 10% have 68% of the wealth, a figure that grows larger every year without a single billionaire going to prison. In 2022, during a time of war and economic uncertainty, Exxon Mobil profited $12.8 billion for products that dramatically worsen the climate emergency. While stealing someone's car is horrendous, the English language lacks a word to characterize making money off human extermination. Interestingly, when energy prices skyrocketed, the European Union levied windfall profit taxes on the big oil companies. In sharp contrast, the US lets Exxon *et al*. steal as much as they want. In his State of the Union address, President Joe Biden urged Congress to



Consequences for killing one person vs killing a hundred people

(Continued on Page 5)

Appeal from a Ukrainian Pacifist

by Yurii Sheliazhenko

Editor's Note: Mr. Sheliazhenko, who heads the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, delivered the following speech at a webinar of the International Peace Bureau, "65 Days of War in Ukraine: Prospects for Peace" on February 4, 2023. First published by World Beyond War, the text was edited for length and clarity.

Dear friends,

Greetings from Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine.

We meet today on the disgusting anniversary of the beginning of a full-scale Russian invasion, which brought to my country enormous killing, suffering, and destruction. These past 365 days I lived in Kyiv, under Russian bombing, sometimes without electricity, sometimes without water.... I heard explosions behind my windows. My home shook from the pounding of artillery in distant combat.

I was disappointed by the failures of the Minsk agreements, of peace talks in Belarus and Turkey. I saw how the Ukrainian media and public spaces became more obsessed with hatred and militarism, even more obsessed, than during the previous nine years of armed conflict, when Donetsk and Luhansk were bombed by the Ukrainian army, like Kyiv was bombed by the Russian army during the past year.

I called for peace openly despite threats and insults. In online spaces, in letters to

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Ukrainian Pacifist

(Continued from Page 1)

Ukrainian and Russian officials, and calls to civil societies, and in nonviolent actions, I demanded a cease-fire and serious peace talks, and insisted on the right to refuse to kill.

My friends and colleagues from the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement did the same. Because Ukrainian authorities closed borders and cruelly hunted for draftees in the streets, in transport, in hotels, and even in churches — we, Ukrainian pacifists, had no choice but to call for peace directly from the battlefield! And it is not an exaggeration.

One of our members, Andrii Vyshnevetsky, was conscripted against his will and sent to the frontline. He asked in vain for a discharge on the grounds of conscience because the Armed Forces of Ukraine refused to respect the right to conscientious objection to military service. It is penalized.

We already have prisoners of conscience such as Vitaliy Alexseinko who said, before the police took him to prison for his refusal to kill: "I will read the New Testament, and I will pray for God's mercy, peace, and justice for my country."

Vitaliy is a very brave man. He so courageously went to suffer for his faith without any attempts to escape or evade prison, because a clear conscience gave him a feeling of security. But such believers are rare.

Most people think about security in pragmatic terms, and they are right.To feel secure, your life, health, and wealth must not be in danger. There must be no worries for family, friends and your whole habitat....

Today we hear a lot of loud words about sovereignty and territorial integrity. They are key words in the rhetoric of Kyiv and Moscow, Washington, and Beijing, and [other capitals of the world]. President Putin wages his war of aggression to protect the sovereignty of Russia from NATO on the doorstep, the tool of US hegemony. President Zelensky asks and receives from NATO countries all sorts of deadly weapons to defeat Russia which, if not defeated, is perceived as a threat for Ukrainian sovereignty. The pro-military-industrial-complex wing of the mainstream media convinces people the enemy must be crushed before negotiations. And people believe that sovereignty protects them from "a war of all against all," in the words of Thomas Hobbes.

Vitaliy Alexseinko
is a
Prisoner of Conscience
Release him now!

War Resisters International
http://wri-irg.org

But the world of today is different from the world of Westphalian peace. The feudal notions of sovereignty and territorial integrity don't address brazen human rights violations committed by all sorts of wars of sovereignty, by fake democratic warmongering, and by open tyranny.

How many times have have you heard about sovereignty, and how many times you heard about human rights? We have lost [concern for] lost human rights, repeating the mantra about sovereignty and territorial integrity. And where did we lose common sense? Because the more powerful army you have, the more fear and resentment it causes, turning friends and neutral parties into enemies. No army can avoid battle for a long time. It is eager to shed blood.

People must understand that they need nonviolent public governance, not belligerent sovereignty. People need social and environmental harmony, not autarkic territorial integrity with militarized borders, barbed wire, and armed men waging war on migrants.

Today, blood is shed in Ukraine. Current plans to wage war for years and years may turn the whole planet into a battlefield. If Putin or Biden feel secure sitting on their nuclear stockpiles, I am scared of their security. Millions of sane people are scared too.

In a rapidly polarizing world, the West decided to seek security in war profiteering and fueling the war machine with arms deliveries. The East chose to take by force what it sees as its historical territories. Both sides have so-called peace plans to secure all they want in an extremely violent manner and then make the other side accept the new power balance.

But it is not a peace plan to defeat

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NOT THE TELEGRAM & GAZETTE
SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2023 / CW.COM WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS/ THE CW NETWORK

City makes all housing affordable

Ecstatic landlords and tenants dance in the street

Les Moorre
Worcester Telegram & Gazette

WORCESTER— After average rents in the Canal District reached $2,700 for a two-bedroom apartment without utilities, and thousands of renters occupied City Hall, councilors unanimously approved an ordinance requiring landlords to charge one third of any tenant's income for rent with utilities. Under the new provision apartments now range between $250 and $4,500 a month with distribution of units based on regularly-updated economic profiles of the income of Worcesterites.

Rocky Rhodes, a formerly homeless full-time worker at McDonald's who now lives at Green Acres Luxury Apartments, told the *T&G*, "Dudes making $150,000 bucks should pay more, way more, than I have to."

After checking the math and seeing that his net profit was higher, Max Little, a Worcester landlord, exclaimed, "We shoulda done this long ago!"

Activists celebrate high rents for the rich

Local stars Cara Brindisi and Dan Burke performed for hours at a spontaneous block party that formed in front of City Hall after the ordinance passed.

See EUPHORIA, Page 4A

Catholic Workers framed for proselytizing

Schaeffer-Duffy's with their grandson, Theo

Heidi Clare
Worcester Telegram & Gazette

WORCESTER- After finding *The Catholic Radical*, in a military recruiting center, Marine Corps Major Joy Kil said, "These street preachers have to be stopped from leaving their propaganda all over the city. I find their stuff at the library, grocery store, laundromat, in churches,... virtually everywhere. Forget critical race theory. These anarchist-pacifists are the real danger to our youth."

Asked if he had left Catholic tracts without permission, Scott Schaeffer-Duffy said with Jesuit-educated ambiguity, "If newsletters slip out of my hands and land in a neat pile here and there, I'd see that more as a miracle than a crime."

Claire Schaeffer-Duffy, an award-winning free-lance journalist for *The National Catholic Reporter*, was equally ambiguous when she said, "A free press is like a free-range turkey. It goes where the gobbling is good."

Mayor Joe Petty said, "I see *The Radical*

See LAVISH PRAISE, PAGE 2A

US bans nuclear weapons

Biden ducks behind the Pope

Anya Neeze
DISASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON- After a visit with Pope Francis during which the pontiff condemned the possession of nuclear weapons for the fiftieth time this year, US President Joe Biden returned to Washington claiming, "I have no choice as a faithful Catholic" and signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. After Senator Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina) defended nuclear weapons and was deluged by 300 million letters and emails from the grassroots organization Nukes R for Kooks, the Senate caved and ratified the treaty

When asked why he took this bold move, President Biden said, "An 80-year-old, luke-warm Catholic can only take so much pestering from a high-in-the polls, 86-year-old pope."

Israel declares democracy

Bagels and falafel for everyone

Neil Down
DISASSOCIATED PRESS

BETHLEHEM- After abandoning the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, and the Zionists to form a new union they call a "Smörgåsbord," Jews, Muslims, and Christians are circle dancing in the streets to "Hava Nagila" and dabke music. Calling the former politicians who kept them apart "schmucks" (fools) and "alkhasirin"(losers), the Israelis and Palestinians now recognize that they have more in common with each other than with any nation in the region.

Ukrainian Pacifist

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the enemy. It is not a peace plan to take contested land, or remove representatives of other cultures from your political life, and negotiate on conditions of acceptance of this. Both sides justify their warmongering behavior, claiming sovereignty is at stake.

A more important thing than sovereignty is at stake today. Our humanity is at stake. The ability of humankind to live in peace and resolve conflicts without violence is at stake. Peace is not eradication of the enemy, it is making friends from enemies, it is remembering our universal human brotherhood and sisterhood and universal human rights...

[G]overnments and rulers of the East and West are corrupted by military-industrial complexes and by great power ambitions. When governments are unable to build peace, it is on us. It is our duty, as civil societies, as peace movements. We must advocate cease-fire and peace talks. Not only in Ukraine, but everywhere, in all endless wars. We must uphold our right to refuse to kill, because if all people refuse to kill there will be no wars. We must learn and teach practical methods of peaceful life, nonviolent governance and conflict management ... and [employ] nonviolent approaches to justice.

We can achieve justice without violence, as Martin Luther King Jr. said. We must build an ecosystem of peace-building in all spheres of life, as an alternative to toxic militarized economy and politics.

This world is sick with endless wars; let's say this truth. This world must be healed with love, knowledge, and wisdom, by rigorous planning and peace action. Let's heal the world together. Ω

STOP WAR

Thank God for These Israelis

Israeli peace activists stopped by the Israeli army outside Huwara

In the first eight weeks of 2023, 61 Palestinians and 14 Israelis were killed. This escalation of violence increased after the election of the most pro-Zionist government in Israel's history, a regime that escalated demolition of Palestinian homes and approval of illegal Jewish settlements on Israeli-military-occupied land.

On February 26, two Israeli brothers returning from a wedding were shot and killed as their car passed through the Palestinian village of Huwara. A crowd of 400 infuriated Jewish settlers marched into Huwara, without opposition from Israeli soldiers assigned to provide security for the area. The settlers torched more than 30 cars and set as many houses on fire. The military only intervened and escorted the settlers out of the village when soldiers thought the mob would kill Palestinians. No settler was charged with a crime.

Israeli General Jehuda Fuchs, chief of operations for the West Bank, said the army was unprepared for the level of violence that night. He called the settler rampage a "pogrom," a term Wikipedia defines as "a violent riot incited with the aim of massacring or expelling an ethnic or religious group, particularly Jews."

Bezalel Smotrich, Israel's Finance Minister, was less critical saying, "The village of Huwara should be erased, but I think the state of Israel should do it, not private individuals."

But some Israelis reacted differently. Israeli Labor Party activist Yaya Fink, an observant Jew, started a go-fund-me campaign to repair the damage done in Huwara. Twelve thousand Israelis agreed with him and donated $465,000. The Associated Press called the campaign "a rare instance of cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians."

And then, hundreds of Israeli peace activists marched toward Huwara to hold a rally for peace and the prosecution of those who rioted. The marchers were prevented, by Israeli soldiers firing tear gas, from entering the village. Many activists were beaten and dragged away. An organizer of the march noted that the military allowed Jewish settlers to enter Huwara, but not peace activists.

While many succumb to the temptation to blame an entire people for the actions of their government, it is important to note that there are Israeli Jews who oppose violence against Palestinians. Such people not only increase the hope for genuine peace, but also remind everyone that Judaism is a religion that welcomes the stranger and promotes peace with justice. Ω

Theft

(Continued from Page 1)

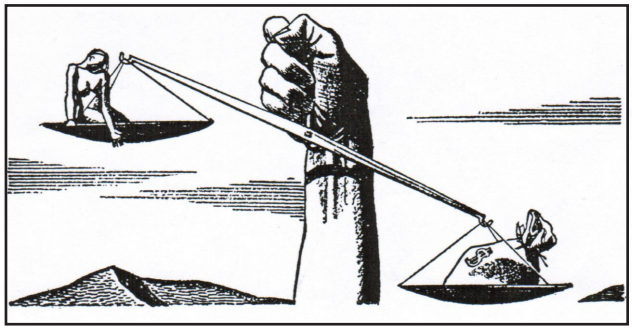
increase taxes on the wealthy and to fund more social spending, but Republicans made it clear this had zero chance of becoming law. Stealing by the rich is not only not punished, it is vigorously encouraged by the state.

Dr. Eric Reinhart, MD wrote an editorial in *The New York Times* (2/7/23) decrying hospitals prioritizing profits over people. He said, "At least 338,000 Covid deaths in the United States could have been prevented by universal health care." Of course, no one goes to jail for theft and murder perpetrated by the corporate medical or pharmaceutical industry.

Meanwhile, on a recent broadcast of National Public Radio's "Business Update," a modest increase in US wages was described as threatening to cause inflation which would precipitate a recession. The assumption is that increased wages necessarily leads to increased prices. No one even considers the possibility of decreased profits. In terms of economic justice, the US minimum wage would have to be three times its current size before a small family could survive on a 40-hour work week.

But no, trillions of dollars are firmly in the hands of a miniscule number of Americans while over 150 million have no hope of achieving the American Dream. Today's super rich make the robber barons of the 19th and 20th century look like Boy Scouts and paupers.

None of us should forget Saint Basil's admonition to the rich: "You are using what belongs to others. All the wealth of the world belongs to you and to the others in common, as the sun, air, earth, and all the rest."

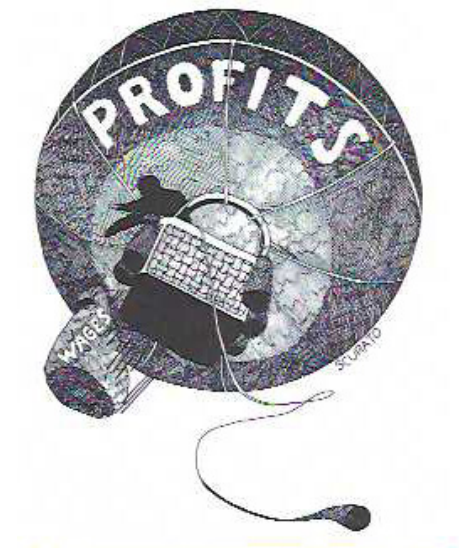


Rockwell Kent

Like the Rich Fool in Luke's Gospel, most of us see an economic boon in selfish terms, rather than as an opportunity to diminish the suffering of others. In a sense, God gives us profit to see what we do with it. The Rich Fool sees a bountiful harvest as a chance to store excess grain away so he can eat, drink, and be merry for years to come. He has no idea that he would die that very night.

Make no mistake, though, God does not hate the rich or soldiers. God loves us all and desires more than anything for each of us to be both holy and happy. God doesn't want any of us to have the lonely, pitiful death Orson Welles portrays in "Citizen Kane." Christ reaches out to the rich and to soldiers. He cites a centurion as someone with the most faith he'd ever seen. Jesus calls a murderer named Saul to become the great apostle Paul, and the wealthy son of a merchant to become the little poor man, Francis of Assisi. The humble words of the centurion "**Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof**...." are recited by Catholics at every Mass just before Communion.

Nonetheless, maybe there would be fewer murderers and thieves on the bottom of our society if those at the top didn't kill and steal *ad nauseum* without remorse, censure, or consequence. Ω



Fedora

by Patience Whitman

Editor's Note: Reflection on the author's father, a WWII veteran.

He wore a fedora.
Hollywood tough guy
in an empty farm town.

Tilted on his head.
Leaning.
Looking to leap.

He had a jaunty look.
Ready for adventure.
Yet shy. Sensitive.

One of five kids.
Dad took off. Went west.
Far from his sour spouse.

They missed him.
Eldest became co-parent.
Mom worked long hours.

Teen flirted with town girls.
Pretending confidence.
Later, married. Drafted.

Sent overseas with other farm boys.
Hell was waiting. Dark. Smoky.
Stench of explosives and rot.

War ended. Sent home.
Hell hopped a ride. Invisible.
Inseparable.

Back, he drank hard.
Talked of trains. Cried hard.
Head in pale, shaky hands.

Wife had no words.
Too sober. Kept it smooth.
Kids seemed clueless.

(Continued on Page 6)

Fedora

(Continued from Page 5)

Daughters found war souvenirs.
Doll baths in a helmet.
Mess-kit tea parties.
Naps on an army cot.

Awkward parent.
Unsure how to be. Stiff.
Numbed.

Sobs soon stopped.
Drank more.
Told don't frighten family.

He was frightened.
Homebound boys were told,
"Keep your mouth shut. Be a man."

Who was the "man" to be?
A long-gone Daddy? Stone-faced sergeant?
Lonely teen figuring it out?

He again wore a fedora.
Trench coat too.
Military look? Uniform?

Neither here nor over there.
Never left. Back the wiser.
Adolescence revisited.

Time passed. Steady pain.
Relations frayed.
Slow spiral south.

No peace. Only surrender.
Bandaids on a wide gash.
Beyond denial.

Every pay day
rounds at the VFW
with old farm boys. To forget.

War buddies forever.
Unspoken misery.
Unseen. Forgotten.

Final withdrawal.
Flag. Salute. Taps.
Graveside. Half circle of stunted lives. Ω

Letters

Dear Friends,
Thanks for your latest *Catholic Radical* and continuing witness.

Claire, I very much appreciated your "Mason Street Musings." Your reflection about peace-making once again dominating your work was very pertinent. What goes around comes around. Or as the French say perhaps more cynically, "*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*." The more it changes, the more it's the same thing. To some degree, we have all inherited the modern and especially American optimism that we can gradually through hard work make the world a better place. Jesus never suggested anything like that. On the contrary, his view of the world's future was quite grim, even apocalyptic. What he said (besides "repent!") was do the right thing, love your neighbor (and enemy!), stand up to injustice, but leave the rest to God.

I think he was pretty clear that our hope for this world is beyond this world. I think my namesake, the Apostle Paul, echoes this when he says, "**The whole creation groans in travail waiting for its liberation from its bondage to decay**." Without this faith how else can we avoid burnout and the cynicism which a certain open-eyed view of the world must surely bring?

But as you say in so many words, look for grace: "God gives new friends, resources, and inspiration for the task. Little Davide is dancing in the kitchen."

Thank you. Peace and love,

Paul del Junco
Toronto, Canada

Happy Valentine's Day, Claire & Scott,
I think Zora Neale Hurston should be included in your list of "Wise Women."

I hope the new year of the Rabbit is going well. I'm turning 77 soon. Keeping the faith. I'm enjoying the Pope's visit to Africa. He is a blessing. "Pace e Bene"

Joán Monastero
Saugerties, New York

To the Editor:
I highly commend Scott on his powerful article, "E. Pluribus Unum," in the February/March 2023 *Catholic Radical*. He cogently summarized a long history of the Palestinian people, whose struggle for self-determination did not begin in 1948, with the formation of the nation of Israel. Previously oppressed under the Ottoman and British empires, Palestinians' continued struggle for human rights is muted or misrepresented by our media. But should Americans continue supporting genocide against Palestinians? As a Christian committed to living Jesus' call to nonviolently address issues both small and large, what am I to do about Israel and Palestine's continued strife?

I suspect many readers believe that increased violence and oppression is the only resolution (as if it has worked so far), and many will not share my commendation of Scott. If my experience as a peace and social justice educator is any indication, I can imagine the outcries. Any criticism of the state of Israel is often immediately met with accusations of anti-Semitism or with extreme statements and rhetorical questions, designed to bully one into silence: *You would have Israel destroyed by Arabs? You believe that leftist propaganda from Amnesty International?* (In February 2022, AI delivered a 263-page analysis of Israel's racist and inhumane treatment of all Palestinians) *Who can trust Arabs? They are all terrorists!*

But if we do not suspend our certainty

Zora Neale Hurston

"Sometimes, I feel discriminated against, but it does not make me angry. It merely astonishes me. How can any deny themselves the pleasure of my company? It's beyond me."

for a few minutes, we would not even be able to hear the protests of Israeli politicians and patriots like former Knesset member, Yossi Sarid, former prime ministers, Ehud Barak and Ehud Olmert, and former Attorney General, Michael Ben-Yair, who all called their country's actions those of an apartheid state. We may not even create space to understand that Palestinians are Semites, too. George Orwell once wrote that when the powerful control language, they control how others think. Where does our unquestioned, absolute support of Zionism come from? Are we courageous enough to critically examine it?

If the conversation continues, almost invariably, the Holocaust is brought up. That atrocity is another painful reminder of humanity's seemingly bottomless depth of cruelty. But that horrible reality cannot be used to enshroud further inhumanities perpetrated by Israelis, or anyone else. Many years ago, as an Arab-American working in conjunction with Jews in our local Arab-Jew Peace Coalition, a Jewish elder who had recently returned from the West Bank, and who had been a survivor of WWII, said to me, in a deeply saddened voice, "I saw in the West Bank what I saw before in Germany…. The lesson is supposed to be, never again to anyone."

How else are we to confront our enemies? I return to Jesus' words and actions as my guideline. Just after chiding the scribes and Pharisees on clean and unclean foods, He angrily called them the blind leading the blind, and perhaps sensing immediate retaliation, He went into what is now Lebanon, Gentile territory—the land of the "enemy," a designation commonly reinforced by religious leaders. Like so many of our attitudes about Palestinians and Arabs today, Jesus was subject to dismissal and dehumanization of these and all non-Jews. A [Samaritan] woman pleaded with Jesus to heal her daughter. Rebuked three times, she asked Jesus to give her the "crumbs" off the master's table. Her great faith prompted Him not only to heal her daughter, but also to commend her faith.

The lesson is that faith is an active thing, not passive acquiescence to the status quo. As my late Jesuit brother, Simon, once wrote about this passage, we learn that faith is a relentless, ineluctable drive towards God and the liberation that characterizes God's kingdom. Faith is the power that enables us to overcome barriers between us that others have ordained, to keep reaching out—ever more creatively and courageously—to the other, even when we have been ignored, even when we've been rebuked. As Jesus reveals in this story, faith is the unyielding insistence that we are all equal in the love of God.

I believe Jesus is the incarnated Word of God. What then should be my response in faith to His modeling? Should I succumb to human revision of His clear teaching of nonviolent, merciful love of all, without exception? Was Jesus wrong, naïve, idealistic? How long will we Christians place any ideology, the failure of violence, or other human beliefs above His clear commandment to love all enemies and friends?

Phil Harak
Southampton, Massachusetts

Dear Scott, Claire, and community,
Thank you for the *Radical*. Things have been ridiculously busy, but I imagine the whole world is playing catch up now. For us, we are dealing with a backlog of people wanting to bring their loved one's ashes home. In Māori culture the body is kept intact, so the sudden influx of ashes has presented a bit of a dilemma. However, during Covid lockdowns, there wasn't a lot of choice for families whose loved ones did not die, basically, in the village next to the cemetery they hoped to be laid to rest in. We were very lucky with our own burials.

As I shared before, we have also been busy helping to care for Charlie's brother who was not expected to see in the New Year. He has picked up again, and now has a son looking after him beautifully.

We now have Cyclone Gabrielle barrelling in on us. We are in a flood zone, so we have done the best we can to prepare the marae (Māori ceremonial house) by raising it as much as we can above the level the waters have come to in previous floods. Our house is raised. So long as the flooding doesn't exceed previous big floods, we should keep our toes dry inside.

While we wait for the full force to arrive....or blow away...whichever it may be, we are enjoying a rare chance to do some studying, preserving, song practicing, and catching up on emails.

I liked the "Words of Wise Women" page in the *Radical*. I am a sucker for short, pertinent quotes.

It was sad to hear about the state of Louisiana keeping "freed" prisoners behind bars still. Such institutionalized nastiness is hard to fathom.

I often view my "Catholic Worker House of Hospitality" days as a training ground for daily life here in New Zealand. While we were in Upper Hutt caring for Charlie's brother, we would have 20-30 people for dinner most evenings. The Māori culture focuses heavily on hospitality. . . .

Sheri Ellery & Charlie Waata
WhirinAki, New Zealand

Catholic Worker Calendar

Rita Corbin

April 7— Stations of the Cross: Please join us for our annual neighborhood procession reflecting on how Christ's passion continues today. Gather at 52 Mason Street. Bread and soup to follow. Noon to 2:30 PM.

May 10—The World Will Be Saved by Beauty: Bring your favorite poem or poems to read aloud at our first-ever communal poetry reading. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow. 7 PM.

April 12 & 26 May 3 & 17 — Evening Prayer: Please join us for prayer & Taizé chant. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow. 7 PM.

Mason Street Musings

In preparation for our trusty carpenter Shawn and his helper Chris to install a new kitchen floor to replace the one I installed 37 years ago, I moved out furniture and other items. While doing so, I noticed several cables along the wall. The house's previous owners had cable television in just about every room. From time to time, we rip out some of these useless cables. Intending to do just that, I cut and removed the cable that provides us internet and telephone. Doh!

I called our providers and pleaded with them to send a repair person while Claire was out doing errands. As Homer Simpson, Dagwood Bumstead, and many other husbands will testify, hiding one's errors can forestall marital humiliation.

Unfortunately, the earliest available appointment was way too late. I might as well have climbed into the doghouse before Claire's return. I had to endure slings and arrows about how I should think before I act. Although, I still disagree with that methodology, I let her observations wash over me unchallenged. Some battles cannot be won.

Interestingly, two and a half days without internet showed me how often I use it, much more than I imagined. When I previously heard reports of young people spending most of their time online, I self-righteously set myself above them. With no cell phone, no Twitter, no Facebook, and no website, I always assumed I was a non-cyber person. Now I know, while I'm no computer geek, I am part of this 21st century.

New York Times *portraits of homeless individuals*

As Bob Dylan tells us, "The times, they are a changing." Fourteen years ago, our guests relied on the land line we have in our upstairs kitchen, which I considered pretty exotic because it's cordless. Now, all our guests have cell phones, most of them with internet connections to entertainment, news, and sports. The days when I serve snacks and watch a big game with all the guests come less and less often. The mystery novels, biographies, and other books on the shelf get checked out rarely. Thank God, people still come out of their rooms for dinner or a donut. As it says in the Bible, "**It's not good for a man or woman to be alone.**"

Just prior to a bitter cold patch in this otherwise mild winter, Blessed Sacrament Church, where Claire and I are lectors at Tuesday and Thursday Mass, opened its parish center as an emergency shelter. Although I haven't checked it out, I'm told that the internet is home to some pretty nasty invectives toward the pastor and the homeless people. While I certainly don't want to go down the cyber rabbit hole of arguing with people who only identify themselves with handles, I do want to respond differently to my sisters and brothers in need. At a parish meeting I attended, a woman complained that the homeless would wait at the bus stop outside her shop, costing her business. Indeed, when I walk to Mass, I sometimes see five or six melancholy folks at this spot waiting for the bus. A look in their eyes, a cheerful smile, and a "How are you getting along?" says not everyone in the neighborhood wants them gone.

While Covid-19 might have banished handshakes and hugs from our repertoires, a friendly word and smile can still remind others that we are all children of the same loving God. In the age of the internet, it's good to keep doing these things in person.

Blessed Easter! Ω

Scott

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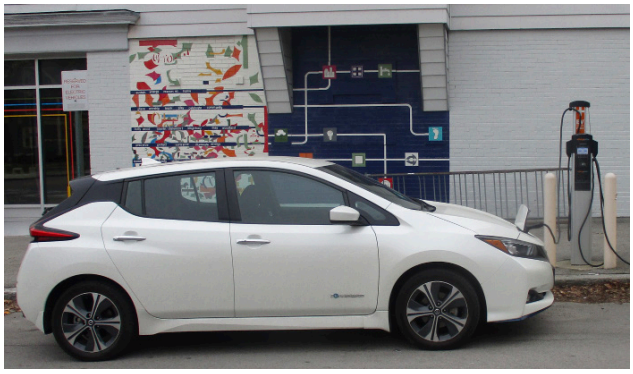
A Closer Look at Electric Cars

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

As the urgency to dramatically reduce fossil fuel consumption becomes more obvious, many governments are boosting electric cars. On February 14, 2023, the European Union announced that the sale of diesel and gas-powered vehicles will be banned in 2035. At least six major auto manufacturers now produce vehicles emblazoned with the moniker "Zero Emissions." But are EVs as good as advocates claim, or is humanity embracing a technological remedy with new problems which will make matters worse? Let's take a look.



Free charging at National Grid's Sustainability Hub, close to where the author goes to Mass on Sundays & Wednesdays

Batteries

Just like gas-powered cars, EVs have a 12-volt battery to power utilities when the car is parked. Like any battery, it has a lifespan and costs between $50 and $200 to replace. EVs also have a lithium-ion battery which varies in size depending on the car's maximum range. This battery requires lithium, cobalt, and nickel.

Climate Nexus (a communications group highlighting the impacts of climate change and clean energy solutions in the United States) raises three concerns:

1. Lithium mining can be land-, water-, and energy-intensive. Lithium production consumes nearly 65% of the water supply in Chile's Salar de Atacama, and some lithium mining sites in Tibet and Argentina have contaminated local water supplies.
2. Some proposed lithium-rich sites, like Nevada's Thacker Pass, are located on historic Indigenous lands. Internationally, Indigenous communities are often excluded from the benefits of the industry even when lithium is mined on their lands.
3. Cobalt mining has been a focus of human rights concerns, including allegations of forced labor, child labor, and other forms of exploitation in the supply chain. Safety conditions in mines are also reported to have worsened recently under Chinese management.

On the up side, Climate Nexus says:
Lithium is abundant, and producing it in the US provides an opportunity for domestic economic growth. Current reserves are expected to carry the transition to electric cars and trucks through to the mid-century, and California's Salton Sea is being eyed for domestic lithium production — and could meet 40 percent of global lithium demand.

Increased battery efficiency, elimination of the need for cobalt in newer batteries, and battery recycling, coupled with high environmental and labor standards for mining, will decrease the negative impact of EV batteries. Lithium can also be extracted inexpensively from recycled cell phones, laptops, and flat screen televisions. Obsolete EV batteries, which retain 80% capacity after ten years in a car, can still be used for home energy and electric grid storage.

On February 28, 2023, *The Boston Globe* reported: "Westborough-based Ascent Elements is partnering with Japanese automaker Honda to supply recycled materials for electric car batteries.... Ascend says that its recycling method uses very little energy and produces little toxic waste."

On March 2, 2023, The Associated Press reported that the Department of Energy granted a $375 million loan to a lithium-ion battery recycling plant near Rochester, New York, which is expected to support 203,000 electric vehicles a year.

On the negative side, though, the storm surge from the September 2022 hurricane in Florida raised another concern about EV batteries. Salt-water short-circuited them and led to fires which could not be extinguished by water. While a concern, EV battery fires are very rare, three times less likely than fires in traditional car batteries. Owners in coastal flood zones are encouraged to park cars above the water line and away from other flammable structures.

Charging

Many EV owners charge in their garage or just outside their home. While convenient, this is typically very slow, up to 30 hours for a full charge. The most common public stations are Level 2 and take between 4 and 10 hours for a full charge. Level 3 DC fast chargers take 30 minutes to an hour. There are currently 160,000 charging stations in the United

Free charging at Worcester State University where the author runs a Central Mass Striders 5K on Saturdays

(Continued on Page 4.2)

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States. Tesla currently maintains its own system of 2,100 chargers, 1,400 of which are "super-chargers." All other charging companies can be used by any vehicle. ChargePoint is the largest, followed by EVgo, and Electrify America.

Cost for charging varies. Some companies charge membership fees; EVgo adds a $2.99 transaction fee for credit card users. Many grocery stores and similar businesses provide one or two hours of free charging to encourage shoppers and discourage long-term chargers. Many institutions provide 24-hour-a-day free charging. Approximately one in ten chargers in Massachusetts are free. When considering the cost of charging, drivers should bear in mind how efficient EVs are. They typically cost 3.5 times per mile less than gas-powered vehicles.

One thing is certain, though — if EVs are going to become the dominant vehicle of the future, there needs to be many more chargers. Hopefully, free and low-cost charging will also endure.

Range

The Tesla Model S Dual-Motor AWD gets 405 miles on a single charge. Most other Teslas get around 320 miles. The Mercedes-Benz EQS 450 gets 350 miles. The BMW iX xDrive50 gets 324. The Ford Mustang Mach-E gets 314. The Kia EV6 gets 310. The Nissan Leaf SV Plus gets 219. The standard Nissan Leaf gets 119. The Chevy Volt gets 53 and Toyota Prius Prime gets 25. The Volt and Prime are backed up by a gas-powered engine.

Every EV's range depends on weather, terrain, and electrical energy usage. When temperatures are below freezing, efficiency declines, as it does when drivers use heat or air conditioning. Maximum range on flat terrain in moderate weather is typically much higher than the EPA prediction.

Several newspapers have published accounts by EV test drivers attempting to complete long-distance trips. They point out that some public chargers are broken or occupied for hours, but none of the test drivers ran out of electric power before they could find an available charger. They also discovered the prevalence of chargers varied state by state. EV trip planning apps or navigational systems that find open charging stations proved very helpful.

Cost

In November 2022, the average EV cost $65,041. Even with federal rebates of $10,000 and state rebates of $3,500, the price of an EV still ran $3,500 more than the average gas-powered vehicle. The 2022 Nissan Leaf, at $28,500, had the lowest base price. A long-range Tesla sold for $56,000 before fees, taxes, *et al*. A lot of money.

But a 2/10/23 *New York Times* article, "Electric Vehicles Could Match Gasoline Cars on Price This Year," reported, "Increased competition, government incentives and falling prices for lithium and other battery materials are making electric vehicles noticeably more affordable."

One also has to consider the lower cost of powering an EV, as well as the lack of regular service, such as oil changes. It is estimated that EVs require 40% less service than gas-powered cars.

On the other hand, the lithium-ion battery in a Tesla is guaranteed for only 8 years or 100,000 miles. A replacement 75 KWh battery costs $16,500. The Nissan Leaf's battery costs up to $8,000. Elon Musk predicts his batteries will last 20 years, but that remains to be seen.

Innovation

In September 2022, a *New York Times* article "India's Electric Vehicle Push Is Riding on Mopeds and Rickshaws," showed how small electric vehicles are taking off. When their batteries run low, drivers stop at one of many stations and swap for a fully-charged one in less time than it usually takes to fill a gas tank. *The Times* said, "The country's success with two- and three-wheeled vehicles that sell for as little as $1,000 could be a template for other developing countries."

Personal Experience

With funds from the will of a beloved Catholic Worker supporter, the Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker bought a 2019 Nissan Leaf SV Plus in September. So far, we have driven over 1,500 miles without paying a penny to charge it. We have saved over $200 in gas and get the equivalent of 108 miles per gallon.

The car also has seat warmers which require much less energy than the regular heater, and an ingenious option called the e-pedal which increases regenerative braking energy and decreases wear on brake pads. It also has numerous safety features like warning sounds when we drift outside a lane or have other vehicles approaching in our blind spot.

In all humility though, the "Zero Emissions" logo on the side of the car is not yet true. Carbon was emitted to build and transport the car. Carbon will be required to recycle its battery. Since only 25% of Massachusetts' electricity is green, carbon is still generated each time we power up. All things considered, EVs do provide at least a 50% reduction in CO2 emissions, a reduction that will improve as the grid become greener. Only if we charge, as friends of ours do, off their rooftop solar panels, can we claim zero emissions.

On March 3, 2023, *The New York Times* reported that the environmental impact of EVs goes way down for SUVs and pickup trucks, the most popular vehicles sold in the US. Bigger is certainly not better.

As environmentally helpful as replacing gas-powered cars with EVs is, nothing compares with the benefit of walking, biking, car pooling, taking mass transportation, and eliminating unnecessary travel, especially when alone. In the long run, we have to get away from the illusion that technology will always provide a way for us to go on living in the same individualistic, energy-consumptive manner we do now. As Henry David Thoreau said so well in 1854, "Simplify. Simplify. Simplify." Ω